

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
CHAIRMAN

CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
DAN BURTON, INDIANA
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
GIL GUTKNECHT, MINNESOTA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
DARRELL ISSA, CALIFORNIA
VIRGINIA BROWN-WAITE, FLORIDA
JON C. PORTER, NEVADA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLES W. DENT, PENNSYLVANIA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
TTY (202) 225-6852

<http://reform.house.gov>

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,
MARYLAND
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,
INDEPENDENT

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman on House Resolution 437 September 15, 2005

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the House on this subject that's before us today. I've served in the Congress for 30 years, the first 19 in the Majority, the last 11 in the Minority. So I've seen life from both sides.

And let me tell you, today is one of the low moments.

We've just experienced a national tragedy that has caused immeasurable pain to countless Americans, and yet here in the House of Representatives, nothing seems to have changed. The house isn't rising above raw partisanship, even in a time of national tragedy. The Republicans are saying, well, we should just trust them because they have created something they're calling bipartisan.

Well, the right way to create something that's bipartisan is for the two parties to talk. Instead, the Republicans met among themselves without talking to the Democrats and have proposed this select committee on a take-it-or leave-it basis. The Majority can't define bipartisanship for the Minority. The Majority has to make the real effort and be willing to do some work, maybe hard work with the Minority to achieve bipartisanship.

Well, why are we suspicious? They didn't talk to us, the Committees in the House and the Senate that have oversight jurisdiction were starting to hold hearings, and suddenly, the Republican leadership said, well, we're going to have a House-Senate committee. And suddenly, it's not a House-Senate committee, it's a select committee.

Well, look at the record of how Republicans have done oversight. Have we really looked at how the White House used the intelligence as faulty as it was that were the basis for going to war in Iraq? No, we haven't had hearings on that, we haven't looked at that. Has the House looked at the question of the outing of a CIA agent by people in the White House in order to punish her husband who was critical of the Iraq war? No, no hearings on that. The actuary working for this administration withheld from Congress information on the cost of the Medicare prescription drug bill. Shouldn't we try to find out what happened? Both Republicans and Democrats were denied the facts before we voted on the bill. No, nothing on that.

We had more hearings when the Republicans were in charge and there was a Democratic administration on whether President Clinton misused his Christmas card list for political purposes. That merited seven or eight days of hearings, but we can't get hearings on these important subjects.

And now we're told there's a bipartisan committee, a select committee that's going to look into this matter. Well, if you really wanted bipartisanship, my friends, my Republican friends who run the House, you need to at least talk to the Democrats and make an effort. But when you don't make an effort and you have a record of abusing the power that you have in running this institution and ignoring the oversight responsibilities on really important matters in order to protect a Republican administration from possible embarrassment, we have no confidence whatsoever that we're going to get to the facts of what went wrong in dealing with Hurricane Katrina.

We need to rise above this raw partisanship and join together — if not on an independent commission, which I think makes the most sense — then at least on a committee that is equally divided with the powers equally divided, where the intent is to work together. But we look at what is being proposed, and the only conclusion that many of us can reach is that this is going to be a committee to pretend to do an investigation but not find out the truth.